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ABSTRACT

This survey research assessed the perception of teen mothers relating to their nurturing/parenting role. The research was designed to identify sources that teen mothers feel they can turn to for help and to give teen mothers the opportunity to voice their opinions. Following a review of the literature on the history of nurturing, teen pregnancy, and infant development, the survey is described. Young mothers (N=45) identified 35 specific nurturing/parenting, household, and luxury skills and how well they performed these tasks. They then identified feelings experienced during pregnancy, during the birth of their infant, and during the first year of their baby's life. Mothers also identified sources they thought would help them or not help them and were then asked to give their best nurturing advice for other young mothers. Results identified "clueless" mothers and mothers with special needs. It provided a base for designing curriculum and instruction to meet the current needs of adolescent mothers and the basic needs of infants. Survey results also revealed safety needs, trust needs, bonding needs, and psychological needs. (Contains 27 references and an 11-item bibliography.) (RJM)

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ASSESSING TEEN MOTHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR NURTURING/PARENTING ROLES

By

Beatrice Kay Wartena

A project submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF EDUCATION
IN CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY
Ogden, Utah

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PAMPHLET

"Nurturing/Parenting Advice For Young Mothers From Young Mothers"

Copies of the instrument, pamphlets, and/or follow up research may be obtained at a reasonable fee. Please submit inquires to:

Kay Wartena
Weber State University
8200 Shephard Union
Ogden, Utah 84408-8200

A follow-up curriculum entitled "Mother/Baby Relationships: Understanding Ones Stewardship Relating to the Nurturing/Parenting Role" is in the final stages of development. This will include eight lessons and a self-evaluation packet for mothers.

Abstract

This survey research assessed the perception of teen mothers relating to their nurturing/parenting role. Forty-five mothers from the Young Parents School in Kaysville, Utah participated in this survey. The survey had four parts. Part one identified thirty-five specific nurturing/parenting, household, and luxury skills. Mothers marked if they felt they do each skill "great," "OK," "need help,"or "did not do," each task and if they would like to learn more about a particular skill. Part two identified feelings (positive and negative emotions) mothers experienced during pregnancy, the birth of their infant, and through the first year of their baby's life. In part three mothers identified sources they perceived they might receive help and/or receive little or no help. Part four gave mothers a voice. They were asked to give their best nurturing advice for other young mothers. This advice was compiled and published in a pamphlet. Copies are available upon request. Comments oral, written, and visual were encouraged and recorded. The survey identified "clueless" mothers and mothers with special needs. It provided a base for designing curriculum and instruction to meet the current needs of adolescent mothers and the basic needs (Maslows Hierarchy of Needs) of infants. It also identified safety needs, trust needs, bonding needs, and psychological needs. The literature review contains a brief history of nurturing from time immemorial to current brain research and the vital need for nurturing with love to start infants on a resilient, healthy life cycle rather than a life cycle of neglect and/or abuse.

NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Throughout the world, the basic socializing and nurturing institution is the family. The family and home are considered the first and smallest school (Barton, 1992). When infants are born, it is essential that their needs are met or they will not survive. While infancy is but a brief duration, it is viewed by many as "the most critical segment of life, the period in which basic developmental pathways are laid down for all human skills and thought process" (Bower, 1941, p.1). The role the mother plays in providing a nurturing environment for her infant is vital.

The purpose of the proposed research is to assess teen mothers' perception of their nurturing/parenting role, particularly the teen mothers of North Davis County, Utah, so they can better meet the basic needs of their babies, particularly during pregnancy and the first year of life. The teen pregnancy epidemic is a vital cause for concern. While much is known about the problems associated with teen pregnancy and teen mothers, little is known about how they perceive themselves. It is important to identify what type of instruction would benefit teen mothers and their babies.

Literature Review

Motherhood, the art of nurturing one's child, has been a part of human existence since time immemorial. Throughout history the role of the father was to provide and protect. The role of the mother was to produce offspring and to nurture. One example from early Christian record relates the story of Mary, a young mother, who "brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger"

(Luke 2:7). She and her husband committed their lives to the safety and care of their infant son.

In 1901 Mary R. Melendy, Ph.. D. published the *Ladies' Home Companion*, a book giving full and up to date information on all the "mysterious and complex matters pertaining to women" of that day. She stated,

> "The hand that rocks the cradle, the mother of the coming man, is too important a factor to be disregarded even in the slightest degree...Great men of all times have traced their lofty ideals and talents, and indeed the whole of their success, to their mothers. A mothers influence, both on body and mind, and her power of transmission of habits, good or bad... are so strong, so subtle the life-giving power and the stamp of individuality, that while she lays the foundation for the offspring, she stamps also indelibly upon the child the surroundings, influences, her conditions of body, and her thoughts in such a way as to affect the child all through its entire existence" (Melendy, 1901, p.7).

Dr. Melendys' five hundred page book provides seven chapters (almost a fourth of the book) on the nurturing care and management of infants and children. The basic need for nurturing in love is expressed throughout the book. At that time there was no real scientific evidence as to why nurturing was so critical to infants, but evidence pointed to the idea that nurturing during infance was critical to the future life of the

child. Children who were deprived care and nurturing did not thrive, if they survived at all (Melendy, 1902) .

Around 1933, in Austria, H. Durfee and K. Wolf began the first investigation of factors involved in the psychiatric consequences of institutional care of infants (Spritz, 1945, p. 70). In 1945 Rene A. Spritz started a long-term study of 164 children from various backgrounds, part institutionalized and part from private backgrounds. This research showed a significance need for the mother-child relationship in relationship to the development of the child during the first year (Spritz, 1945)

A few years later,in 1950, John Bowlby was asked by the World Health Organization to report to them on the mental health of homeless children. His studies are influenced by research and theories of Ainsworth, David, Darwin, and Freud. This assignment provided him a valuable opportunity to explore the problems of the homeless. He formulated the principle that "What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother-substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment" (Bowlby, 1969, p. xii).

Bowlby's research took a giant step when he modified the environment on monkeys and provided a basis for the study of attachments and loss in monkeys. He discovered that the attachments one sets during infancy establish a pattern for life in monkeys, and he believed the same pattern exist in humans. "It has been said repeatedly

that attachment behavior does not disappear with childhood but persists throughout life" (Bowlby, 1969, pg. 350).

When an infant is born, he is "far from being a tabula rasa" (Bowlby, 1969, p. 265). Bowlby believed that the infant is equipped with a number of behavioral systems and that they are ready to be activated, depending upon the stimuli. They could also be terminated depending upon the lack of appropriate stimuli.

Recent brain research provides evidence of connections and /or lack of connections made in the infant's brain during pregnancy and the first year. These connections provide valuable clues as to why some infants thrive and some do not thrive (Nash, 1997). In 1997, the importance of the child is noted in the White House, in parenting magazines, on TV, in research, in education, and on the home front. What can we do to improve the quality of life for infants?

This is of particular concern if the mother is an adolescent herself. Because of her age she may have trouble adapting to her new role as nurturer/parent. Her lack of maturity and skills may affect the care she is able to provide her infant. It is important the mother is able to identify the needs of her baby and that the mother is capable of meeting these needs.

Infants

It is during the first weeks and months of life that infants try to understand and master their environment and find those efforts encouraged or discouraged. They make their first attempts to concentrate on their surroundings. It is also during this time that

infants first conclude that the world is orderly and predictable or that the world is not orderly and predictable (Brazelton, [n.d.], Magid & McKelvey, 1989). It is during this time that the infants feel loved and wanted or not love and wanted.

The events infants experience during the first year of life are crucial to their future development (Brazelton, [n.d]; Chan, 1994; Osofsky, 1995). F. Cline, a consultant in human behavior, reported in 1979 that infants learn along a logarithmic curve (Magid & McKelvey,1989). It is estimated that half of all knowledge, *our life's knowledge*, is locked in during that first year. During the second year, the infant learns half as much as they did during the first year. Nurturing care of infants is vital during their first year of life.

In Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the physiological needs must be filled first (Maslow, 1970). These needs include food, air, clothing, shelter, safety, love, and belonging needs. These needs must be filled prior to the esteem needs. It is important to give the child a feeling of being loved and cared for, commonly described as bonding (White, 1995, Magid & McKelvey, 1989). In providing for the safety needs of an infant, it is important to build a relationship based on trust (Day & Kunz, 1990). Meeting the basic needs of the infants is vital (Brazelton, [n.d.]; Day & Kunz, 1990; Hafen, 1994; Magid & McKelvey, 1989; Maslow, 1970; Swick, 1993; White, 1995).

When infants' basic needs are met, they begin their journey in life on a cycle of love, trust, and growth. If their basic needs are met inappropriately, they begin their journey in life on a cycle of abuse and/or neglect. Neglected infants may turn into

neglected youth if the cycle is not changed. These youth now account for one-fifth of the nation's crimes (Dill & Stafford, 1996). Each day more children are identified as having learning disabilities. Increased crime, unwed teen mothers, and other problems of society may possibly relate directly to the quality of care infants receive.

The teen pregnancy epidemic

Teenage parents are one of the largest sources of unattached children in America. For the girl who gets pregnant, the fun is over and her life is changed forever. The Alan Guttmacher Institute reported 3,000 teenagers are getting pregnant each day in the United States. This is more than one million pregnancies each year (Magid & McKelvey, 1989). "Becoming a mother during one's adolescence means that the responsibility of caring for a helpless infant coincides with a time when an adolescent is struggling with her own developmental issues (Burke & Liston, 1994, p. 594)."

The outlook is usually grim for teen mothers and their babies. The mothers' early sexual habits puts them both at higher risk for disease. The teen mother may be immature, immobile, ignorant, lack knowledge, and/or lack finances to care for her infant. The infant may become neglected. Children are raising children and in many cases it is not working (Brazelton, [n.d.]; Magid & McKelvey, 1989).

Sally Jones, Child Life Specialist at McKay Dee Hospital in Ogden, Utah, stated "When teen mothers have babies, they love their babies. It is not a lack of love or desire, but a lack of tools (knowledge and resources). The teen mothers are still developing their

own identity and maturity and are unprepared to care for their infants" (personal communication, November 17, 1996).

In 1994, the APPI (Adolescent Parent Perception Inventory) was developed and administered to adolescent mothers for the purpose of measuring their perceptions of social support and the effects of parenting on their lives (Burke & Liston, 1994). This inventory provided useful information for social and community organizations, but it did not assess their perception in actual parenting roles. It did not give the parents an opportunity for their comments and feelings. The need for more research was indicated.

Prior to this, in 1982, the "*Perception of Parental Role Scale*" was designed and administrated (Gilbert & Hanson, 1982). This scale was designed for college students and employees. It addressed the perception of how fathers and mothers perceived their responsibilities and roles. This scale identifies the parents' roles but does not relate directly to problems facing teen mothers.

In North Davis County, Utah, over 150 unwed teen mothers drop out of school each year. This is a vital concern for the community. Will the mothers be able to provide for their babies? Will the babies get the care they need? Will the babies start life on a healthy cycle of love and growth or on a cycle of abuse and/or neglect? How can we evaluate and then meet the needs of the young mothers and their babies.

Literature Review Summary

In today's fragmented society, the family and the home is continually being challenged. A young girl who becomes pregnant is confronted by unrealistic demands.

Should she keep her baby, abort it, or give it up for adoption? Will the father of the child marry her, help her, or even abandon her? Will her family and friends accept her? How will she care for her baby? How will she pay the bills and provide a home? How can she complete her education? The list goes on.

This literature review identified the critical need for nurturing infants and concerns about the teen pregnancy epidemic. This review established a need for understanding the teen mothers' perception relating to her parenting and nurturing role. Assessing the perception of teen mothers, in North Davis County provides valuable information. It could facilitated the creation and enrichment of curriculum and instruction related to the current needs faced by this group of mothers. When educators help mothers become more resilient, they also enrich the care of her baby (Bernard, 1993; Hafen & Worth, 1994; Magid & McKeelvey, 1989; Marion, 1995; Osofsky, 1995; Wartena, 1966; Swick, 1993; Williams, 1996).

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this research was three-fold. First, research assessed teen mothers' perception of their nurturing/ parenting role and identified feelings mothers are experiencing. Second, research was designed to identify sources where the teen mother feels she can turn for help and/or not turn for help. Third, the research was designed to give teen mothers' the opportunity to voice their opinions and suggestions and to identify areas for curriculum and instruction enrichment. A survey was developed to accomplish these three goals.

In assessing teen mothers' perception of their nurturing/parenting role it was important to identify tasks mothers felt they do great, do OK, need help, "do not do," and/or identify tasks mothers would like to learn more about. A young mother may experience many feelings. Identifying and sharing these feelings could provided an assessment tool for correlating instruction and guidance related to the young mothers' nurturing/parenting role.

Research was designed to identify sources where the mother feels she could turn for help and sources where she felt she would receive little or no help. This information may identify where the mother is getting her help and instruction. This will help in providing instruction. In identifying what advice mothers feel is important for other mothers we can identify what is important for mothers themselves. This helps mothers become a part of the solution. By putting their thoughts into action, they become more resilient (Bernard, 1993).

Meeting the current needs of teen mothers is crucial, both for the mother and the baby. It is hard to meet needs if they have not been identified. Helping mothers identify their individual needs could provide a basis for helping mothers help themselves. Results of the survey provided a basis for enriching curriculum, instruction, and future research related to the current needs of teen mothers and their babies.

METHODOLOGY

An original survey was designed to assess the perception of teen mothers nurturing/parenting role. A nurturing team critiqued and validated the contents and format of the survey. The data was collected as a cross-sectional design involving one point in time from one sample of young mothers. The surveys were collected, tabulated, and analyzed. Tables and figures were designed to examine the results of this research project. Enrichment ideas for curriculum, instruction and further research were outlined.

Sample

Mothers at the Young Parents School in Kaysville, Utah were targeted to participate in this research. The Young Parents School operates under Davis County School District and services all teen parents in Davis School District. A nursery is provided. Instruction is designed to aid young parents in completing their high school diploma and learning nurturing/parenting skills. Dr. Larry Shumway is the director. Approximately 170 students attend the school, and approximately 75 students graduate each year according to Ann Dale. The majority of the students are teen mothers. Only teen mothers were used in this research.

Definition of terms

A teen mother is defined as a teen-age girl who became pregnant and chose to keep her baby. Subjects for this research were teen mothers that have returned to school at the Young Parents School in Kaysville, Utah. The term "teen mothers" and "mothers" will be used interchangeably in this report.

For the purpose of this research, the nurturing/parenting role is defined as the role of the mother in caring for her child's basic needs (Brazelton, [n.d.]; Day & Kunz, 1990; Hafen, 1994; Magid & McKelvey, 1989; Maslow, 1970; Swick, 1993; White, 1995). Household chores are defined as chores and skills one does to maintain and finance the family and the home (Gilbert & Hanson, 1982).

Nurturing Team

A nurturing team critiqued the survey, giving recommendations and suggestions which were then incorporated into the final survey design. The nurturing team consisted of three professionals in fields relating to the needs of teen mothers and infants. The team members were Tom Day, Assistant Professor of Child and Family at Weber State University; Sally Jones, Child and Family Specialist at McKay Dee Hospital; and Alice Breckenridge, a teacher at the Young Parents School in Kaysville, Utah.

The Instrument

An original instrument was designed because the literature review revealed there was no appropriate instrument available to meet thee purpose of this study. This instrument was designed specifically to assess teen mothers' perceptions of their nurturing and parenting role. There were no right or wrong answers. The survey was divided into four sections. Space was provided for additional items and personal comments were encouraged. A copy of the instrument and general instruction is provided in Appendix A.

Part One - Nurturing Parenting Role

Part one of the survey measured how teen mothers perceive their nurturing/parenting role. Mothers marked thirty-five items which measured their perception of their ability to accomplish each task. They marked if they felt they did each task great, OK, needed help or if they did not do that particular task. A separate column was provided for mothers to mark if they would like to learn more about each task.

Following are examples of how a mother might mark the survey. A mother might mark that she is great at providing creative activities for her baby and also mark that she would like to learn more about creative activities for babies. A mother might mark that she does not cook meals for her family and also mark that she would like to learn about cooking meals. The mother might mark that she needs help with her baby in medical emergencies and not mark that she wants to learn more about medical emergencies.

Of the thirty-five items listed, twenty-five items related to the mothers' nurturing/ parenting skills in caring for the basic needs of her infant (Brazelton, [n.d.]; Day & Kunz, 1990; Hafen, 1994; Magid & McKelvey, 1989; Maslow, 1970; Swick 1993; White, 1995). Seven items relate to household management skills (Gilbert & Hanson, 1982). Three items were luxury items and do not relate to either role. Mothers added additional items during the survey. The thirty-five items used in the survey and items added by mothers are identified in Table 1. Emphasis has been placed on the nurturing/parenting tasks in relationship to the teen mothers.

Table 1

Identifying Nurturing/Parenting Skills

Nurturing/Parenting Skills Basic Needs of Infants	Household Items	Items Added by Mothers
Bathing baby	Budgeting finances	Patience
Bonding with baby	Earning money to pay bills	Baby disease
Burping baby	Keeping car repaired	Spending time together
Calming crying baby	Paying bills	Both parents Changing loving baby
Caring for baby alone	Planning vacations	Feel safe with partner
Changing diapers	Planning and preparing meals for your family	Everyone in home loving baby
Coping when baby is sick	Providing baby furniture	Building relationships
Communicating with baby		Getting father to help
Doing baby's laundry	Luxury items Not necessary	Babies growth: emotionally, and physically
Feeding baby healthy meals		Babies growth: emotionally, and physically
Getting baby's immunizations	Purchasing a new new car	
Loving baby	Purchasing expensive gifts	
Maintaining stability in home	Purchasing a new TV	
Meeting medical emergencies		
Planning family activities		
Playing with baby		
Providing a trust relationship		
Providing child care		
Providing daily exercise		
Providing routine medical checkups		
Providing a safe environment		
Providing creative activities for baby		
Providing transportation for baby and self		
Treat diaper rash		
Using infant car seat		

Part Two - Feelings

The second part of the survey assessed young mothers' perception of feelings they may have experienced at various stages of motherhood. Forty different words were used to describing feelings. Alice Breckenridge, a teacher at the Young Parents School in Kaysville, Utah, along with other members of the nurturing team helped select the words familiar to terms used by the mothers attending the school. The words were listed in alphabetic order on the survey. The mothers were instructed to identify their feelings during pregnancy, birth of their baby, when their baby was three to six months old, and when their baby was one year old. Mothers could use each feeling as often as they perceived it applied to their situation. Mothers could add other feelings they experienced during these times. Following are some examples of how mothers might mark the survey: a mother might feel stressed, worried, and happy while pregnant and then feel happy and content when her baby was born. A few months later she might feel concerned, happy, stressed, and worried. When her baby is a year old she might feel nurturing and valued, yet, still feel worried and stressed. The mother might feel many things, few things, or feel nothing. There are no correct answers, just perceptions of the mothers' feelings. See Table 2 for a classification of positive/negative feelings.

Table 2

Positive/Negative feelings

Positive Feelings	Negative Feelings
Accomplished	Afraid
Cheerful	Awkward
Content	Confined
Happy	Discouraged
Joy	Helpless
Loved	Impatient
Needed	Overwhelmed
Nurturing	Sad
Valued	Stressed
Worthwhile	Worried

Part Three - Sources of Help/Little or No Help

The third part of the survey provided a list of places that mothers perceive they may receive help and/or places they feel they might receive little or no help. The places listed were church, community, family/relatives, father of your child, friends, grandparents, nurses/doctors, parents, spouse/partner, school classes, teachers. Mothers added vocational rehabilitation, counselors, and the relatives of the babies' father.

Part Four - Nurturing Advice

The final part of the survey had two sections. The first was designed to give the mothers' voice. Each mother gave her best parenting/nurturing advice for other mothers. The final section of the survey identified the age of the mothers and babies.

Permission

The Human Subjects In Research Guidelines for Weber State University were followed as they applied to this particular research. Verbal permission and arrangements for participation at the Young Parents School was coordinated by Ann Dale, Assistant Director. Prior written permission for each student participating, was obtained. These documents are found in Appendix B. Permission for the original art work is also included here.

Budget

All costs and materials were provided by the author unless otherwise indicated. Copies of the book, *Dear Mommy and Daddy (*Hafen, 1994*)*, were donated by Jewel Lee Kinley of Kinley Ed Ford Dealership in Layton, Utah and James Eugene Holladay. Sally Jones, representing McKay Dee Hospital, donated copies of *Parenting Tips Tots to Teens* (Weber & Jones, 1994*)*. Smiths Food Store of Farmington, Utah donated refreshments.

Procedure

The survey was administered on the morning of February 5, 1997. Forty-five teen mothers participated in the survey. This represented 100% of the mothers in attendance at the school on this particular day. (Inclement weather conditions influenced the number of mothers in attendance.) General instructions were given to the group. Each mother received a copy of the instructions, a copy of the survey, and a pencil. A separate area was provided, with a teacher, for mothers needing assistance. The survey was

confidential. No names or identifying information was requested. The mothers could ask questions at any time. Comments were encouraged.

Completed surveys were placed in a large envelope. Mothers were invited to select one of the two books donated. The books were donated as a "thank you gift" for those participating in the survey and as a nurturing/parenting reference for the teen mothers. Extra books were donated to the teachers, staff, and school library.

This was a random survey conducted at one time and at one place. Forty-five valid surveys were collected and items were coded and tabulated. MicroStat Analysis was used to provide item analysis. Susan E. Jensen from the Testing Center at Weber State University assisted in processing the survey results. Two sections of the survey were tabulated by hand. See Appendix C for tabulated results of the survey.

The nurturing/parenting advice given by the teen mothers was compiled into a pamphlet entitled "Nurturing/Parenting Advice For Young Mothers From Young Mothers." Original art work by Shana Merrill, a mother at the Young Parents School, was designed and used in the study and placed on the phamplet. A copy of the phamplet is attached to the back cover and one is included in the comments section. Comments written, oral, and visual were documented and placed in Appendix D. Correspondence relevant to this research is found in Appendix E. Enrichment suggestions for curriculum, instruction, and recommendations for further research are included in this report.

Tabulations

When three scores were given, the first score represented the total number of mothers who marked the item. The two numbers in brackets represent the number of pregnant mothers who marked the item, plus the number of mothers with babies who marked the item. For example, if thirty-five mothers marked an item, of which five were pregnant mothers and thirty were mothers who had babies, it would be tabulated as 35 (5 + 30).

There were forty-five mothers participating in the survey. Eleven of the mothers were pregnant. Thirty-four of the mothers had babies. This information would tabulate as 45(11+34).

RESULTS

The purpose of this research was three-fold. First, the research assessed teen mothers' perception of her nurturing/parenting role and identified feelings she experienced during her pregnancy, the birth of her baby, and the first year of her baby's life. The second purpose of the research identified places mothers felt they might receive help and places they felt they would receive little or no help. The final part of the research provided an opportunity for the mothers to offer their best nurturing/parenting advice for other young mothers. Figure 1 represents the ages of the mothers and their babies. Forty-five mothers participated in the survey.

Figure 1

Range of ages of Mothers and Babies

Ages of mothers:

18(6+12) mothers were sixteen years old or younger

27(5+22) mothers were seventeen years old or older

Ages of mothers' babies:

11 pregnant mothers

11 mothers with newborn to 6 months old

7 mothers with babies six to twelve months old

16 mothers with baby/babies over one year old

N=45

The survey was divided into four parts. Each part is identified and discussed.

Part One - Nurturing/Parenting Role

Of the forty-five mothers surveyed, forty-three marked that they perceive themselves as doing great or OK at loving their baby, changing diapers, communicating with their baby, and providing a trust relationship. This represents 95% of the mothers as shown in Table 3 - How Mothers Perceive Their Nurturing/Parenting Role. The two mothers (4.4%) who did not perceive themselves as loving their baby, communicating with their baby, and providing a trust relationship with their baby should be targeted as needing instruction and training in nurturing/parenting skills. This may represent the two pregnant mothers who commented during the survey that they "did not have a clue." Refer to comments in Appendix D items 15, 16, and 18.

While 86.7% of the mothers felt they could provide a safe environment for their baby, 14% felt they could not. Again, this represents an area to target and incorporate curriculum and instruction.

Mothers ranked nurturing/parenting skills the highest. This included loving their baby and providing for their baby's basic needs. The majority of the mothers perceived themselves as good nurturers and parents. They scored high (over 80%) on meeting their baby's basic needs and loving their baby. Mothers marked lower in relationship to household skills (37.8% to 68.9%). Their lowest marks on household skills related to keeping the car repaired, earning money to purchase a new car or TV.

Table 3

Percentages of Skills Mothers Perceive they do Great/OK

Skills		Skills continued	
95.6%	Loving your baby 43(9+34)	77.8%	Provide child care 35(6+29)
	Changing diapers 43(9+34)		
	Communication 43(9+34)	71.1%	Plan family activities 32(8+24)
	Trust relationship 43(9+34)		
		68.9%	Prepare family meals 31(7+24)
93.3%	Babies immunization 42(8+34)		
	Bond with baby 42(9+33)	64.4%	Provide transportation 29(6+23)
	Play with baby 42(9+33)		
	Treat diaper rash 42(8+34)	48.9%	Pay bills 22(5+17)
	Use infant car seat 42(9+33)		
		44.4%	Budgeting finances 20(3+17)
91.1%	Bath baby 41(9+32)		Purchase exp. gifts 20(4+16)
	Calm crying baby 41(9+32)		
	Provide daily exercise 41(7+34)	42.2%	Earn money 19(3+16)
	Provide med. checkups 41(7+34)		Pay bills 19(3+16)
			Plan vacations 19(5+14)
88.9%	Care for baby alone 40(9+31)		
	Do babies laundry 40(9+31)	37.8%	Keep car repaired 17(2+15)
86.7%	Provide safe environment 39(9+30)	22.2%	Purchase care 10(2+8)
84.4%	Feed baby healthy meals 38(8+30)		
	Maintain stable home 38(7+31)		
	Meet medical emergencies 38(7+31)		
82.2%	Burp baby 37(9+28)		
	Provide baby furniture 37(7+30)		
80.0%	Cope when babies sick 36(6+30)		
	Provide creative activities 36(9+27)		

N=45

There was a variety of skills that mothers marked that they needed help with. These are shown in Table 4. The six items that mothers marked they needed help with most were household items and luxury items. Eight mothers marked they needed help coping when their baby was sick. Four of the mothers were pregnant and four of the mothers had babies that marked this item. Eight mothers also marked that they needed help providing child care. Five of the mothers were pregnant and three of the mothers had babies.

Five of the six mothers that marked they needed help providing creative activities for their babies had babies. Three of the five mothers that marked they needed help caring for their baby alone, meeting medical emergencies, and feeding baby healthy meals were mothers that had babies.

Of vital concern is the three mothers that had babies who marked they needed help providing a safe environment for their baby. Two mothers with babies also marked they needed help maintaining stability in the home. Again, this is an area of vital concern.

Pregnant mothers who marked items relating to needing help in nurturing/parenting skills is understandable. Classes are provided to help these mothers. The will also have the opportunities to work in the nursery at the school. Should their feelings and skills not improve prior to the birth of their baby, then there is reason for concern. This should be an area to target for further evaluation.

Table 4

Skills Mothers Marked They Needed Help With

Times Marked	Skills Mothers Marked They Needed Help With
over 10	Budgeting finances 18(5+13) Providing transportation 13(4+9) Earning money to pay bills 12 (2+10) Paying bills 11(3+8) Purchasing a new car 10(3+7)
Between 5 and 9	Coping when baby is sick 8(4+4) Providing child care 8(5+3) Purchasing a new TV 8(2+6) Preparing family meals, plan vacations 7(2+5) Purchasing expensive gifts 7(3+4) Keeping car repaired 6(2+4) Provide creative activities 6(1+5) Caring for baby alone, feed baby healthy meals 5(2+3) Provide baby furniture 5(3+2) Meeting medical emergencies 5(2+3)
Between 1 and 4	Maintaining stability in the home 4(2+2) Plan family activities 4(0+4) Bathing your baby 3(1+2) Provide a safe envirounment 3(0+3) Bonding with your baby, burping baby 2(2+0) Calming your crying baby 2(1+1) Get babies shots, provide medical checkups 2(2+0) Playing with baby 2(1+1) Treat diaper rash 2(2+0) Changing diapers, doing babies laundry 1(1+0) Communicating with baby 1(1+0) Love your baby, provide trust relationship 1(1+0) Provide daily exercise and use infant car seat 1(1+0)

N=45

When mothers marked tasks that they "did not do" over twenty marked that they do not purchase a new TV or car, both luxury items. The next five items that mothers listed that they "did not do" were household management skills and purchase expensive gifts. Items that mothers "did not do" is displayed in Table 4. Refer to Appendix D for comments written during the survey.

Seven mothers marked that they do not burp their baby's. The age of their baby was a key factor here as babies over one year old usually do not need to be burped. Four mothers marked that they do not plan and prepare family meals, but several mentioned that their mother did it for them. Two mothers marked that they do not do their baby's laundry, again, they commented that their mothers did all the laundry.

One mother marked she did not use an infant car seat because her child was older than one. She also marked she was pregnant It is important to verify what State Law requires regarding the use of car seats in state being tested.

The mothers' who marked that they do not "cope well when baby's sick, provide daily exercise for their baby, or provide routine medical checkups for their baby" were pregnant mothers' who had not yet given birth to their babies. The mothers were very careful to explain why they "did not do" nurturing/parenting tasks and several were very honest in mentioning that their mother did the tasks for them.

Table 5

Skills Mothers Marked they "do not do"

Times marked	Skills mothers marked that they "Do not do"
Over 20	Purchasing a new TV 25(8+17)
	Purchasing a new car 22(5+17)
Between 10 and 19	Keeping car repaired 19(4+15)
	Planning vacations 17(2+15)
	Purchasing expensive gifts 17(2+15)
	Pay bills 13(4+9)
	Earn money to pay bills 11(3+8)
Between 5 and 8	Burping baby 7(1+6)
	Planning family activities 6(0+6)
Between 1 and 4	Budgeting finances 4(1+3)
	Planning and preparing family meals 4(0+4)
	Providing transportation 3(1+2)
	Do baby's laundry 2(0+2)
	Provide furniture 2(0+2)
	Provide day care 2(0+2)
	Provide daily exercise for baby 2(2+0)
	Cope with sick baby 1(1+0)
	Feeding baby health meals 1(1+0)
	Provide routine medical checkups 1(1+0)
	Using infant car seat 1(1+0)

N=45

Mothers marked a total of 343 marks on tasks they would like to learn more about. This indicated that the average mother would like to learn more about 7.62 items. See Table 6.

Table 6

Skills Mothers Marked They Want to Learn More About

Times Marked	Skills Mothers Marked They Want to Learn More About
Over 20	Budgeting finances 27
Between 10 and 19	Earning money to pay bills 18 Planning and preparing family meals 17 Cope with sick baby 16 Meet medical emergencies 16 Provide child care/transportation 16 Pay bills 15 Maintain stability in home 13 Provide creative activities 13 Care for baby alone 12 Feed baby healthy meals 12 Repair car, purchase new car 12 Provide safe environment 10
Between 5 and 9	Communicate with baby 9 Provide daily exercise for baby 8 Bath baby, bond with baby 7 Babies immunizations 7 Provide medical checkups Purchase expensive gifts/TV 7 Calm crying baby 7 Provide baby furniture 7 Treat diaper rash 7 Provide a trust relationship 5 Do baby's laundry 5
Between 1 and 4	Burp your baby 3 Love your baby 3 Play with your baby, use infant car seat 3 Changing diapers 2

N=45

The three skills mothers marked the most were budgeting finances, earning money to pay bills, planning and preparing family meals. These are all household items. The next four items mothers marked were nurturing/parenting skills. These were coping with sick baby, meeting medical emergencies, providing child care, and transportation for the mother and her baby.

Thirteen mothers wanted to learn more about maintaining stability in the home and providing creative activities for their babies. Along this line, ten mothers wanted to learn more about how to provide a safe environment. This are vital skills for mothers to master.

Nine mothers wanted to learn more about how to communicate with their baby and eight wanted to learn how to provide daily exercise for their baby. Seven mothers marked they wanted to learn more about bathing their baby, bonding with their baby, getting babies immunizations and medical checkups, calming crying baby and treating diaper rash, all nurturing/parenting skills.

Understanding what areas mothers want to learn more about provides important information for curriculum development. This information also helps mothers learn to identify important nurturing/parenting skills and prioritize them. When mothers recognize areas they need help and/or want to learn more they are more likely to seek that help. The fact that these mothers have returned to school indicates a willingness to learn.

Part Two - Feelings

In this section mothers had the opportunity to mark the variety of feelings they experienced during pregnancy and the first year of their baby's life. At the beginning of the survey two mothers raised their hands and asked what to mark if they were pregnant and had "no clue" how they would feel when they had their baby. The class was instructed to mark "pregnant" on their survey if they were pregnant and to mark how they perceived they would feel and/or leave areas blank regarding unidentified feelings related to their future baby. This caused an interesting phenomenon in the survey regarding the mothers perception of their parenting skills at different stages of their babies' development. Some of the mothers were unable to see beyond today. They had "no clue," plan, feeling, or perception about their future. Several mothers commented that they had never been around babies before, never baby sat; and did not know if they would be able to love and care for their babies. Note comments in Appendix D. Other mothers knew they would be able to love and care for their future baby.

There were twenty feelings listed. Each feeling could be used a total of four times. Thus each mother could mark as many as eighty feelings. The mothers experienced a variety of feelings. The positive feelings mothers experienced most were cheerful, happy, loved, and joy. The negative feelings they experienced most were worry, stress, and feeling overwhelmed The positive feeling they experienced least was feeling needed. The negative feeling mothers experiences least was feeling helpless. Table 7 indicates how often each feeling was marked.

Table 7

Total number of times mothers marked each feeling.

No. Times	Positive Feelings	No. Times	Negative Feelings
94	Cheerful	84	Worried
92	Happy	72	Stressed
89	Loved	71	Overwhelmed
84	Joy	63	Afraid
79	Accomplished	55	Awkward
78	Nurturing	49	Sad
66	Content	48	Impatient
65	Valued	47	Discouraged
61	Worthwhile	38	Confined
57	Needed	30	Helpless
765	Total positive	557	Total Negative

Mothers marked a total of 1,322 feelings. This was an average of 29.4 feelings each mother experienced during pregnancy and the first year of her baby's life.Although eleven of the mothers being surveyed were still pregnant, all forty-five of the mothers had experienced pregnancy. Eleven of the mothers had newborn babies and a total of thirty-four mothers, including the eleven, had experienced having newborn babies.

The mothers experienced 1.32 times more negative feelings than positive feelings during pregnancy. This was the only time the mothers experienced more negative feelings than positive feelings. During the birth of their babies, the mothers experienced 1.9 times more positive feelings. The period of time the mothers experienced the most

positive feelings, or 2.03 times more positive feelings than negative feelings, was when their babies were three to six months old. Mothers marked a total of 1,322 times, or a average of 29.4 feelings per mother. Of the 1,322 marks, 765 were positive and 557 were marked negative for an average of 1.37 times more positive marks than negative ones. This is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Tabulation of Mothers' Feelings

	Pregnancy	Birth of baby	Baby 3-6 mo	Baby age one
Total Positive Feelings	198	237	211	119
Total Negative Feelings	261	125	104	67
No. of mothers in each group	11	11	7	16
No. of mothers experienced	All 45	34	23	16
Ratio	1.32 x's more Negative Feelings	1.90 x's more Positive Feelings	2.03 x's more Positive Feelings	1.78 x's more Positive Feelings

Part Three - Source of Help and Sources of Little or No Help

The third part of the survey gave teen mothers the opportunity to identify sources from which they felt they might receive help and sources from which they felt they might receive little or no help. Table 9 ranks the sources mothers felt they might receive help from and the sources mothers felt they would receive little or no help.

Forty of the forty-five mothers (89%) felt they could turn to their parents for help. This included all eleven of the pregnant mothers and twenty-nine of the mothers with babies. Only five mothers with babies felt they would receive little or no help from their parents. As shown prior, some of the mothers are having their parents take care of various nurturing/parenting skills. (See comments in Appendix D.

Thirty-seven of the forty-five mothers (82%) felt they could receive help from nurses/doctors and family/relatives. Eight mothers did not feel they could receive help from their nurses/doctors.

Thirty-seven of the mothers (82.2%) felt they could turn to their teachers for help while only thirty-three of the mothers (73%) felt they could turn to the school classes for help.

Thirty of the mothers (65%) felt they might receive help from their spouse/partner. Fifteen of the mothers (33%) felt they might receive little or no help from their spouse/partner or had no spouse partner. This may indicate that they may be single mothers, but, the question was not asked. Twenty-six of the mothers (58%) felt they might receive help from the father of their child. Nineteen of the mothers(42%) felt they

would receive little or no help from the father of their child. One mother added she felt she would receive help from the relatives of the babies father and one wrote in Vocational Rehabilitation.

Fourteen of the mothers (31%) felt they might receive help from the community. Thirty-one of the mothers (69%) felt they would receive little or no help from the community.

Table 9

Sources mothers feel they might receive help and sources they might receive little or no help

Places	Receive help	Receive little or no help
Parents	40(11+29) or 89%	5(0+ 5) or 11%
Family/relatives	38(10+28) or 84%	7(1+ 6) or 16%
Nurses/Doctors	38(11+27) or 84%	7(0+ 7) or 16%
Teachers	37(9+28) or 82%	8(2+ 6) or 18%
Grandparents	33(9+24) or 73%	12(2+10) or 27%
School classes	33(9+24) or 73%	12(2+10) or 27%
Spouse/partner	30(7+23) or 67%	15(4+11) or 33%
Friends	29(8+21) or 64%	16(3+13) or 36%
Church	26(7+19) or 58%	19(4+15) or 42%
Father of your child	26(9+17) or 58%	19(2+17) or 42%
Community	14(2+12) or 31%	31(9+22) or 69%

N=45

Part Four - Nurturing/Parenting Advice

The final section of the survey gave young mothers a voice. The mothers were asked to give their best nurturing advice for other young mothers. All of the mothers surveyed took this opportunity and they offered excellent advice and comments relating to their nurturing/parenting role. This informative advice was compiled in pamphlet form along with several parenting/nurturing ideas.

Shanna Merrill, a teen mother from the Young Parents school, was commissioned to draw a picture of her perception of a young mother. She did. A copy of the picture is on the cover of the pamphlet and another copy is included with the visual communication in the comments section.

A copy of the pamphlet is included with this research as well as in the comments section. Appendix D contains the oral, written, and visual communication from the mothers. Comments enriched understanding of teen-mothers' perceptions of their nurturing/parenting role and provided valuable clues to help the mothers..

Upon completion of the survey, each mother selected a nurturing/parenting book as a gift for participating in the project. Copies of the books, *Dear Mommy and Daddy* (Hafen, 1994) and *Parenting Tips Tots to Teen* (Weber & Jones, 1994), were donated for use in this research project. The mothers were excited and appreciative of the opportunity to select a book that they might keep. Extra copies of the books were donated to the teachers, staff, and to the Young Parents School.

DISCUSSION

The project accomplished its purposes. A survey was designed to measure perception. A Nurturing Team critiqued the instrument. A cross-sectional design was used to collect data from one point in time and from one specific sample. The results were tabulated. Information and comments related to the research are included. Information from this research project:

A. Identified areas of concern in relationship to the care and future welfare of teen mothers and their infants in North Davis County.

B. Provided insight and knowledge in relationship to the perception of the teen mothers nurturing/parenting role and their feelings and identified sources from which teen mothers might receive help.

C. Gave teen mothers a voice and validated their feelings. Nurturing/parenting advice is contained in a pamphlet that will be distributed.

D. Provided a foundation for enriching nurturing/parenting curriculum and instruction.

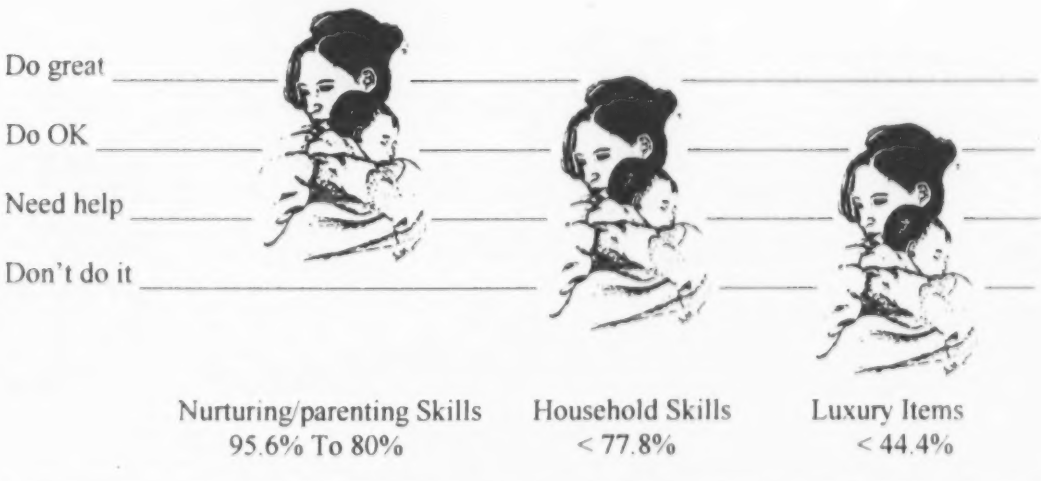
Assessing teen mothers' perception of their nurturing/parenting roles identifies the valuable role the Young Parents School plays in assisting young parents with their nurturing/ parenting role. The survey results identified that the teachers and school provide a vital link in identifying and assisting young mothers' needs.

Teen mothers' perception of their nurturing/parenting role reflected that the majority of the mothers perceive themselves as doing great and Ok in relationship with

relationship with their nurturing/parenting role. Mothers perceive they are meeting the basic needs of their babies (Brazelton, [n.d.]; Day & Kunz, 1990; Hafen, 1994; Magid & McKelvey, 1989, Maslow, 1970; Swick, 1993; White, 1995). Less than 77.8% of the mothers felt they did great or OK at any of the skills relating to household skills. Less than 44.4% did any luxury items. Figure 2 provides a picture of how the mothers perceive themselves.

Figure 2

Mothers' Perception of Their Role



N=45

The majority of mothers indicated they needed help, did not do, and/or would like to learn more about household items, particularly budgeting money which was marked by twenty-seven of the mothers (Burke & Liston, 1994). Most of the luxury items were

marked in the "don't do" or "need help" column.

The mothers marked a total of 343 times that they wanted to learn more about particular tasks. This is an average of 7.6 items per mother. This suggest that teen mothers are willing and possibly eager to learn more. It Identifies what mothers want to learn and the areas where mothers need and will accept help. For the mothers that perceive themselves as doing great/ok in most areas, but, still want to improve, this is promising. For the mothers who marked they "do not do" various nurturing/parenting skills, this shows a vital need for providing an education and understanding relating to these skills. Enriching the mothers knowledge provides a better life for both the mother and her baby.

The two mothers identified as "clueless" should be watched and targeted for future evaluation. The school provides an opportunity for these mothers to work in the nursery, take classes related to parenting skills, and provides an opportunity for them to address these concerns. Education is a vital tool in understanding the nurturing/parenting role, and the school is providing an important link in identifying and addressing these needs.

A number of mothers felt they might receive little or no help from the father of the child. This indicates an extreme concern about the father, his sexual activities, his lack of responsibility, and maturity. Future research would be recommended in this area. Although the number of mothers living with the father of the baby was not asked for, the number of responses to partner/spouse and father of the baby, indicates that many of the

mothers are single mothers and the father of the child is not in the home or supporting the child.

Of the forty-five mothers surveyed, thirty seven the mothers(82%) felt they could turn to their teachers for help, and thirty-three mothers (73%) felt they could turn to the school for help. This indicates the teachers and school are reaching out and helping teen mothers adjust to the challenges relating to teen mothers.

The comments, written, oral, and visual, added perception and depth to the study. The mothers' wanted to be understood. All of the mothers offered nurturing advice. Most of the mothers commented on at last one item. The picture reveals the depth, perception, and feelings. It is representative of teen mothers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The school works on a continuing basis. Young parents may enter the program at any time. The students continue only until they complete requirements for graduation. They may leave the program at any time/for any length of time to have a baby, work, care for a sick child, etc. This requires the program to be very flexible to meet these needs.

Enrichment Ideas for Curriculum and Instructions

Results of the survey and comments from the mothers indicated areas for improving and enriching the curriculum. Mothers expressed a desire to learn more. Following are some enrichment ideas designed to strengthen curriculum and instruction in relationship to nurturing/parenting skills of young parents. It is possible some of these suggestions may already be in progress.

1. Suggestions for new students beginning the program:

A. Assign new parent to read *Dear Mommy and Daddy* (Hafen, 1994), *Baby Care for Beginners* (Williams, 1996), and *Parenting tips tots to teens* (Weber, 1994).

B. Have students take the survey and have survey results evaluated. Utilize information and recommendations in relationship to nurturing/parenting curriculum.

C. Assign helpers or partners to assist new students into the mainstream of the program. Provide a counselor.

D. Assign new parents to work in the nursery.

2. Design a nurturing/parenting assembly once a month (minimum). A program where guest speakers or experienced mothers come and talk to the mothers. Provide a question/answer time for the parents. Be very selective in your selection of speakers.

3. Consider incorporating the ITI (Integrated Thematic Instruction) model into the curriculum (Kovalik,1993).This model is based on three interlocking, interdependent principles: brain research, teaching strategies, and curriculum development. When consistently followed this model ensures that students remain "upshifted" for learning, prepares the students with a lifelong guideline for learning and can be particularly effective in areas relating to the nurturing/parenting role.

4. Consider purchasing a copy of the video "Your Children' Brain," available through ABC News Prime Time Life, by calling 1-800-913-3434. This is an excellent video depicting the influence of nurturing/parenting skills and their effects on babies brain development during the first year. A discussion session with qualified instruction is recommended following the viewing of the movie. The video contents may be incorporated into the ITI model.

5. Consider a weekly newsletter. Have parents design it. Provide a question/suggestion box. Provide current update research/ information.

Further Research

Assessing teen mothers' perceptions of their nurturing/parenting roles has opened the door for further research. Following are seven areas that would be recommended for future research.

1. It would be interesting to compare the results of the mothers at school and mothers who have not returned to school. Would the results be different if the home students were surveyed? Home students are the teen parents that chose to keep their babies and have chose not to return to school

2. What would the results be if the survey was given to all first time mothers? Would the mothers experience similar feelings and perceive their abilities similar? Would this type of research identify the "clueless" mothers and those that need help with their nurturing/parenting skills? Would they want to learn more?

3. Survey teen fathers. If teen fathers were surveyed, would they score higher in the nurturing/parenting skills or higher in the household skills? Would they experience similar feelings at the birth of their baby? Where would they turn for help? Would it be similar to the teen mothers?

4. It would be interesting to add more question. Some addition questions that might be asked are:. "Why did you choose to keep your baby?""Would you marry the father of your baby?" "Why, or why not?" "How do you perceive your future, in the next year, in five years, and in ten years? "What future goals do you have, and how do you hope to accomplish them?"

5. I would recommend exploring the possibilities of assessing, designing, and providing a father's awareness program.

6. In future research of this nature, I would recommend that the "Nurturing Team" work and meet together. It is important that they meet each other and be able to

exchange ideas at one time. I worked with them separately and went around in circles for awhile trying to correlate ideas. Bring a treat and make a day or two of it.

7. In relationship to the part of the survey on feelings. There were several changes that might have improved the survey. All of the words to describe feelings should have been adjectives.

A comments relating to the great people I worked with. These people were committed and interested in nurturing/parenting. They understood the program and they care about teen mothers' and their babies. Each persons' contribution has enriched this research.

FINAL COMMENTS

Final comment are in relationship to the care an infant receives during the first years of life. This is vital. It is being addressed in current research, in parenting magazines, in the White House, by religious leaders, on TV, and around the world. Dr. Rosalind Charlesworth, Professor at Weber State University stated it simply "It is important to provide parents with education for nurturing their babies" (personal communicaion, April 28,1997). The mother is the infants first nurturer and teacher. She plays a vital role in the future of her baby and the future of the world.

Improving the quality of nurturing/parenting skills of teen mothers improves the quality of care they give their infants. Improved care of infants increases the chances for the infants to began their journey in life on a cycle of love, trust, and growth. Every teen mother is special and in unique circumstances. Most mothers love their baby's and desire to provide a nurturing environment. Education is the key to her future and that of her baby. "The time for change should begin in the play pen, not in the state pen (Magid & McKelvey, 1989)." Understanding and reaching the needs of young mothers and infants in North Davis County will improve their quality of life for generations to come.

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"Stay calm while pregnant & breast feed".

"Don't yell at you child or tell him/her that they are bad, then they will grow up thinking they are bad."

"Play with them, feed their needs. Be in a safe environment. Make sure your baby is healthy & happy."

"Just love your baby and do your best. It's not as hard as they say it is."

"Be patient. It takes time to realize what is wrong with your child. Do not result in violence. It's not the end of the world for having a baby at such a young age. It's just the beginning for your child & your new life."

"Spend time teaching your child as well as playing with him/her."

"Remember its all your fault if your child gets into something because you weren't watching them. It is their responsibility only to be a child."

Again, remember to Love your child and have patience with them. Give them unconditional love.

PS:

The XO's stand for hugs and kisses. Give your baby lots of hugs and kisses.

Compiled by Kay Wartena, 1997
XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Basic needs of babies:

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Build a solid trust relationship (Day & Kunz)
-a basic faith in humanity
-a nonjudgemental acceptance of others
-a sense of consistency about your world and the people in it
-honest and sincere communication
-a feeling of mutuality

It is important to give your baby a feeling of being nurtured, loved, and cared for, commonly described as bonding (Magid & McKelvey).

Provide creative activities and exercises for your baby.

Nurturing/Parenting Advice

For Young Mothers

From

Young Mothers

oung Parents School, Kaysville, Utah

First, "Love your baby"

"Give your baby unconditional love"

'ecommended most by young mothers)

"Love your baby and tell 'em"

XOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXOXO

Next, young mothers recommend
Patience, Patience, Patience,
Be calm and have patience
Patience, Patience, Patience

More advice from young mothers:

"Always show your child you love them no matter how you feel or what mood your in Remember it will be worth the time and caring when they are grown."

"First you need to be sure that your are ready to handle the responsibility of a child. Many qualities are required such as patients, lots of love, and your time. Have a positive attitude & don't get discouraged."

"Be patient with your baby because they are so special. Spend time and learn with them."

"Take care of their needs & feelings and make sure your baby is in a safe & clean environment and never hit your child."

"My child is often sick and it is stressful. The best thing to do is keep calm and have someone there to help you when you get too stressed."

"Just remember that there are going to be hard times. That can only get better with time. Just do the things you need to do. To be a mom is hard work. Give yourself credit."

"Be patient and understanding, they don't know when they are doing wrong."

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"Ask everyone to help cause if they wouldn't help then you will be really stressed & feel no one wants to help. So ask for help."

"Try not to get yourself overwhelmed".

"Don't let others tell you how you should raise your kid. Listen to their advice, but, don't feel you have to follow it. It's your child, do what you think is best."

"To let their children have imaginations, play with them, read to them. Never threaten to leave them."

"Just to love your child unconditionally & realize your love for your child. When you love someone unconditionally & know that you do then you will be a good parent and nurturer. Nurturing is a form of love."

"If my sister ever got pregnant at the age I did, I would kick her butt because its hard and at a young age your teen life is gone."

"Love your baby. Treat him/her with respect. Your baby is #1 with everything. Babies are a miracle."

"We got ourselves into this and its over and done. We can only think positive and act positive around our babies and not show them any regrets."

"Get someone you can trust, a doctor or friend, that will help you with questions you have raising your child."

"Keep getting an education (college)."

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"Be real good with your baby, get all their shots done on the day they should be done."

"Books, tell your child everything. Be your child's best friend."

"Make good choices for you and your baby. Nurture your baby. Keep him or her healthy. Be the best you can be for your baby."

"Think of you and your baby, eat healthy, and try not to do the wrong things while your pregnant. Do what you feel is best for you and your baby."

"I think I should have enjoyed the pregnancy more, and not have hated it so much. That's all the time I had with my child."

"Don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for needs when you have them. Love your child and let him know it as best as you can."

"Remember that your still young, your gonna miss teenage life. You need to try your hardest to be responsible & be a good mother".

"Give them love and attention. Play with them, feed their need."

"No matter what happens, you just have to hang in there and deal with it. In the end it will all work out OK."

"Take care of yourself, take a break once in a while. Take care of your baby. Listen to your parents. Take care of yourself if your P.G."

Title - "Assessing Teen Mothers' Perceptions of their Nurturing/Parenting Roles"

Copies of the instrument, pamphlets, and/or follow up research may be obtained at a reasonable fee. Please submit inquires to:

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A follow-up curriculum entitled "Mother/Baby Relationships: Understanding Ones Stewardship Relating to the Nurturing/Parenting Role" is in the final stages of development . This will include eight lessons and a self evaluation packet for the mothers.